

# We the People Democracy Reform Act of 2017

Provisions in italics are new for 2017 and were not in the package in the last Congress.

## **Title I: INCREASING TRANSPARENCY, REMOVING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, AND RESTORING ENFORCEMENT**

### **Subtitle A: Campaign Disclosure and Transparency Reform**

Part I: Van Hollen “DISCLOSE Act”: Requires disclosure of donations more than \$10,000 to organizations spending at least \$10,000 in an election.

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse “DISCLOSE Act” (S. 1585): Includes certain provisions regarding foreign money to prohibit domestic corporations with significant foreign control, ownership, or direction from spending money in elections. It also cracks down on shell companies, which can be used to launder foreign money into elections, by requiring companies spending money in elections to disclose the true owner of the company, so election officials and the public know who is behind the company.

Part II: Rep. David Price “Stop Super PAC-Candidate Coordination Act” (H.R. 425 in 114<sup>th</sup> Congress): Shuts down individual-candidate Super PACs and strengthens the rules that prohibit coordination between other outside spenders and candidates and parties.

Part III: Rep. Beto O’Rourke “Real Time Transparency Act” (H.R. 1548): Requires all candidates for federal office to report contributions of over \$1,000 to the FEC within 48 hours.

Part IV: Rep. David Price “Stand By Every Ad Act” (H.R. 4519 in 113<sup>th</sup> Congress): *Expands the existing “Stand By Your Ad” transparency requirement to include corporations, Super PACs, and other special interest groups. The provision would require the leader of a Super PAC, corporation or special interest group to appear in an ad to take responsibility for its content and disclose their top five donors on-screen. It would also expand the disclosure requirement to cover online communications and prerecorded robocalls.*

Part V: *Other Campaign Finance Reforms (proposed by Rep. David Price and Senator Tom Udall)*:  
**Sec. 1051:** Requires the FEC to promulgate regulations with respect to what constitutes best efforts under existing law for determining the identification of persons making contributions to political committees, including the identifications of persons making contributions over the Internet or by credit card.  
**Sec. 1052:** *Establishes restrictions on candidates and political parties regarding joint fundraising committees.*

*Sec. 1053: Establishes new requirements for lobbyists and political committees to disclose bundled contributions.*

*Sec. 1054: Establishes judicial review procedures for actions brought challenging the constitutionality of campaign finance laws.*

*Sec. 1055: Expands the definition of “public communications” in the Federal Election Campaign Act to include Internet communications.*

*Sec. 1056: Reenacts the \$5,000 limit on contributions to Super PACs making independent expenditures. This is an issue that has never been decided by the Supreme Court, although Speech Now in the DC Circuit and a number of other Circuit Courts of Appeal have found the limit unconstitutional.*

**Subtitle B: Establishment of the Federal Election Administration**

Rep. David Price “Federal Election Administration Act” (H.R. 5439 in 114<sup>th</sup> Congress): Replaces FEC with a five member Federal Election Administration and enhances enforcement powers.

**Subtitle C: Lobbying Reform**

Senator Michael Bennet “Lobbying and Campaign Finance Reform Act” (S. 1480 in 114th): Closes the 20 percent lobbying registration loophole.

**Subtitle D: Revolving Door Reform**

Rep. Elijah Cummings “Financial Services Conflict of Interest Act” (H.R. 859): Prohibits government employees from accepting bonuses from private sector employees for government work and tightens lobbying rules and revolving door restrictions in the financial sector.

**Subtitle E: Addressing Conflicts of Interest**

Rep. Katherine Clark “Presidential Conflicts of Interest Act” (H.R. 371): Requires the president, vice president, their spouses, and minor or dependent children to divest all interests that create financial conflicts of interest placing those assets in a true blind trust. Prohibits presidential appointees from participating in matters that directly involve the financial interests of the president, the president’s spouse, or businesses controlled by the president or the president’s spouse.

*Requires the sitting president and presidential nominees of a major political party to make public federal income tax returns for the three most recent tax years.*

**Subtitle F: Public Access to Visitor Logs**

Rep. Mike Quigley “MAR-A-LAGO Act” (H.R. 1711): Codifies the pro-transparency policy established by former President Barack Obama to release

visitor logs at the White House 90 to 120 days after they were created. In addition, due to President Trump's frequent use of his private business properties for official business, the provision mandates the disclosure of visitor lists at the Trump Organization's Mar-A-Lago Club and other locations where official business is conducted.

**Subtitle G: *Requiring Individuals Nominated or Appointed to Certain Positions to Disclose Certain Types of Contributions***

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse "Conflicts from Political Fundraising Act" (S. 1184): Amends the Ethics in Government Act to establish new political fundraising reporting requirements for Senate-confirmed nominees, Special Government Employees, non-career senior executive service, and schedule C political appointees. The requirement has a four-year lookback.

**Title II: PUBLIC FINANCING**

**Subtitle A: *Reforming Presidential Election Financing***

Rep. David Price "EMPOWER Act" (H.R. 2143 in 114<sup>th</sup>): Would restore the role of small donors in presidential campaigns. The bill would restore and repair the presidential campaign financing system, a key post-Watergate reform, by implementing a voluntary small-donor matching program with higher matches to support modern presidential campaigns.

**Subtitle B: *Reforming Congressional Election Financing***

Rep. David Price "Empowering Citizens Act" (H.R. 424 in 114<sup>th</sup> Congress): Would establish a voluntary, small-donor public financing system for House and Senate campaigns, empowering small donations from citizens while allowing candidates to focus on constituents instead of big donor fundraising.

**Title III: REDISTRICTING**

John Tanner "Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act": Introduced in the past by former Rep. John Tanner, this provision would require each state to establish an independent, citizen redistricting commission that would be tasked with redrawing congressional district lines once every ten years after each decennial census.

**Title IV: VOTER REGISTRATION**

**Subtitle A: *Automatic Voter Registration***

Senator Patrick Leahy "Automatic Voter Registration Act" (S. 1353): Requires states to automatically register eligible vote when they interact with certain state

*and federal agencies, unless those people decline. The bill would streamline the voter registration process and allow citizens to register online. It also includes important privacy protections, and makes it clear that the information used to automatically register voters will remain secure.*

***Subtitle B: Same Day Registration***

*Rep. Keith Ellison “Same Day Registration Act” (H.R. 1044): Requires states to allow eligible individuals to register to vote on the same day as the election.*

***Subtitle C: Vote By Mail***

*Rep. Earl Blumenauer “Vote By Mail Act” (H.R. 2669): Includes provisions from this legislation that require states to allow eligible people to vote by mail at no cost.*